

WORK EXPERIENCE – GOOD PRACTICES FOR PRESENTING APPLIED METHODS

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Abstract: *One of the most outstanding difficulties of business life nowadays is how the lack of workforce is treated. Thanks to this organizations put more and more emphasis on keeping the current staff besides recruiting the right employees. The aim of the study is to highlight a novel approach in the success of keeping the employees where the emphasis is on the experience of work – and within this to help the flow experience. This is used consciously by more and more organizations to strengthen employee loyalty. Based on secondary research the study collects corporate examples related to organizations which started the conscious experience-centric enterprise programs. The introduction of the right practices through company examples offers an analysis which helps summarise the possibilities and the practical realization. As a result of the study, it can be stated that the experiences provided by organizations can be separated according to different target groups. Three categories can be considered including existing employees, potential and those ones who are leaving the company. In case of all three target groups, several applied opportunities can be found through the corporate examples examined. Each group has got special needs so it is needed to use different methods to achieve the members of this. We can say that conscious organizations already start the influence through experiences in the job searching phase, which is often helped by experts who are specialized in this. After having employed these people there is an unlimited palette of possibilities to be used through gamification to internal organizational competitions to virtual reality. In several cases, the process does not stop even after the employee has left the company so that the company's reputation is not harmed by a bit and to give the possibility of later employment. This trend would appear more consciously in Hungary too thanks to the multinational companies and organizations with an advanced approach.*

Keywords: *employee retention; experience; flow; HR; trend.*

JEL Classification: *J28; J53; O15.*

1. The Purpose of Work Experience and its Possible Target Groups

Nowadays, it can be observed that the borders between working hours and spare time become increasingly blurred thus the forming of work environment requires a paradigm shift and innovative way of thinking from both organizational and individual points of view (Szabó, 2013). Based on the research of Institute of Public Relations

of 2017, the organizations should apply the linkage with job along positive emotions as a tool which results in a more committed and more effective work and can inspire others as well. It follows what important role the human feelings play in establishing the everyday employee experience (Scott, 2017). Based on Gergely – Pierog (2016), impressions experienced at the workplace are naturally influenced by the style of management to a large extent; one of its appearance forms is the motivation which may come even from the conscious establishment of experience. Emphasis of the experience linking with job has attracted the interest of professionals and the media in Hungary in recent years. At the same time, a multitude of foreign examples is already available but more and more people also follow the trend in Hungary and begin to establish own systems along principles which are already in places. Consequently, the appropriate experiences largely influence the employees' satisfaction. Nevertheless, it should be specified that not only the money will be important for the employees of the 21st century from the aspect of satisfaction (Juhász, 2016; Szondi, 2018), therefore, strong emphasis should be placed on the conscious organizational establishment of experiences. Insofar as the focus of the new possible HR function is on the conscious establishment of experiences related to work and employer and the available surveys are taken as the basis then the HR shall be able to aim at three target groups for the organizations: the existing employees, the potential employees and the leaving workers with the same emphasis (Figure 1).

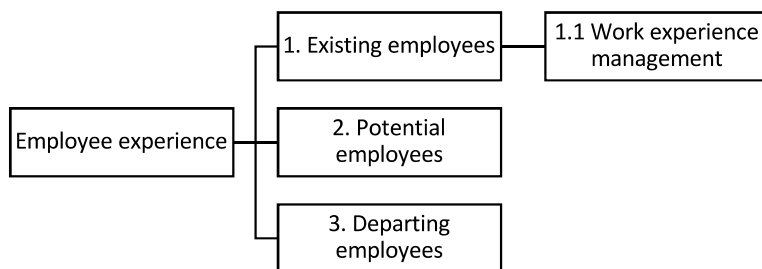


Figure 1: **Different areas of the operation of employee experience**
 Source: Own editing, 2019

In all three cases, the application of different methods would be the most expedient which means that different HR functions can be attached to disparate target groups due to the differing assets and the integrated operation. However, from the point of existing employees' view, the employee experience can be dissolved further and, in case of the employees who are already work for an organization, can be completed with a rethinking of activities arising from work explicitly; this duty would be fulfilled by the work experience management as a possible new HR area. During the establishment of employee experience, the primary target group consists of the colleagues belonging to the existing workforce because they are those ones who can be directly and immediately reached thus they can be affected in a direct way and within a short deadline. To this end, a certain part of companies devotes energy to that, in one respect, the employees will enjoy the environment and, on the other hand, will face new types of challenges in terms of technology as well; all so that the

workers do not only provide good performance but also love their workplace (Vendler, 2015). Consequence of this is that everything what happens to a worker from discovering the job advertisement of an enterprise until leaving the company can contribute to the formation of employee experience. In case of several companies, it is an operative practice that the gyms, foosball tables, beanbag chairs, free massage and healthy food representing the employee experience are recognized as a kind of corporate allowance; yet, the work experience management should go beyond a little bit. Aim of the work experience management should be, as the naming also shows, that the work can metamorphose into a kind of experience which is accessible thanks to our workplace and each colleague should desire it. Therefore, in this case, essence of the task is to find those points in the course of planning the work and job which can be transformed without moving the efficiency in a negative direction but, by means of the execution, it may become experiential to carry out a task which was previously a routine one in the given case. The flow experience determined by Csíkszentmihályi (2010) can be closely related to the above-mentioned conception which was known as the perfect experience by the society. Essence of this state is to form a situation when we ourselves direct our actions and we control our own destiny. On these rare occasions, we almost become transfigured and feel such a magnificence which will be a milestone in our memories and result in that we want to reach this state as frequently as possible. However, it is important to emphasize that we do not often undergo these moments, the most beautiful experiences of our life, in passive, receptive and relaxed state. The most beautiful moments usually occur when someone is able to endlessly maximize his/her physical or mental performance with intense will in order to accomplish a difficult but important task. The perfect experience is therefore something that does not just happen to us but rather we intentionally create it. Following this logic, we may arrive as far as that the work itself as an intentional activity can also help us to feel the flow. And if we think of the fully perfect experience then, based on the theory of Csíkszentmihályi, we will perform the given activity not because we expect anything in return but just for the reason that the given activity itself brings joy to the person performing that. And this state can buttress the reduction in the importance of cash benefits against providing an optimal experience.

2. Opportunities to Establish Work Experience, through Organizational Examples

2.1. Opportunities to Establish Employee Experience for Existing Employees

In case of really innovative companies, such as *Airbnb*, the provision of experiences appears at the level of strategy in a manner that the HR director is already called "Employee Experience" director and the purpose of HR is considered to ensure the formation of employee experience (Morgan, 2016). As well, the whole HR department is referred to as "worker experience" department. Travel credits assist to enable the employees' work to be transformed into real experiences; the workers get those credits in exchange for their work and they themselves can also redeem those ones (Airbnb, 2018). Beyond that, the company has also achieved significant results concerning the freedom from discrimination and the diversity which are analysed in detail in Murphy's research (2016) as well. The research states that the company presents itself in 191 countries and the organization unequivocally places emphasis on the advantages of multi-ethnic employee application during its operation.

Insofar as the establishment of work environment is primarily scrutinized then, in addition to the aforementioned travel site, the company *PREZI* can be a good example in the domestic pioneering. Namely, the free corporate restaurant service (breakfast, lunch) is deemed to be essential in this organization; in particular, healthy nutrition is important as well (for instance, 40 kg orange per day is consumed in the form of fruit juice). There is no question about modern environment; a wide space is available where the people wishing to work alone can comfortably sequester themselves, either to the top of a tower or a nook covered by artificial grass, while the environment favours the work as well. The tables separated by green plants can loosen the usual workplace atmosphere which is further helped by the area established for graffiti where the independent creation is free. In the course of shaping the office, different fantasy names help to enhance the uniqueness, such as "Cabinets of Curiosity" where lost and found objects are placed. In the spirit of a healthy lifestyle, the "scooter focus" is at the centre since the majority of colleagues go to work on two wheels but the spaces are such that the moving can be carried out by scooters. The in-house kindergarten and the flexible working hours which take the deadlines into consideration as well as the light atmosphere appear as further factors when establishing the enjoyable working environment (Nemes – Mészáros, 2016; Prezi.com, 2018). SAP has transformed its internal system into cloud-based ones in the spirit of an experience work, due to which the labour retention force of SAP is 93.7% based on the surveys. In recent years, SAP has received several recognitions, including the Reliable Employer award in Hungary in the summer of 2017; this award was founded by the German-Hungarian Chamber of Commerce (Kis, 2017).

The BBSC (Budapest Business Services Center) always had policies which are really family-friendly by helping to keep work-life balance in everyday life. How they do this? It is totally based on employee feedback with the aim of recognizing the employee's personal needs. According to this, the work-life balance actions appear at a strategic level, so the wellbeing programs like the free fresh fruits for everybody, or the private health care insurance which is extending on other family members are really popular opportunities for the employees. Moreover, there is an outstanding active parental community who are organizing camps for workers' children during school holidays. Besides this, the company supports forms of flexible work and the final goal is to provide a teleworking opportunity for every employee of the company (AON, 2018).

In addition to the general targets (retaining, loyalty), *Walmart* has made the establishment of work experience compatible by elaborating the physical workers' compliance with the safety standards. All this has been achieved via a mobile application. Aim of the company giant employing thousands of persons was that the very dispersed labour force shall meet the safety standards. For this purpose, such a form of training has been chosen which takes only 3 minutes per occasion and it has been built in the employees' daily lives and workflows. As a short-term result of it, employees within the organization have not just talked about who is at what level during the game but also about why it is important to comply with these rules. The results were quantifiable which means that the accidents have decreased by 54% after the gamification (Heong, 2015a).

A Spanish beverage distributor company, *Pernod Ricard*, has placed the employee succession planning at the centre of the establishment of work experience. The asset has been introduced via a telephone application. Its aim is that the managers of

future can try themselves and Ricardo, who is a tamagochi, and manage him during the work so that he can stand firm in different corporate situations in the most effective way. As a result of the development program, the managers had an overview of how to operate the structural strategy, how to manage and control the people, how to form the managerial competences, how to define the external and internal motivation and how to raise awareness of the efficiency of creative solution opportunities as a consequence of the successful task performing (Pernod – Ricard, 2016).

2.2. Opportunities to Establish Employee Experience for Potential Employees

Dreher, as a well-known beer factory tried to develop their recruitment system by giving experiences to applicants. Instead of a regular job fair, they organized it at a pub after they surveyed the preferences of potential applicants. It was really successful and not only because of filling numerous positions through this action but at the same time, the event was a perfect teambuilding opportunity for the companies' workers as it was organized by volunteers giving them an unforgettable and unusual corporate event. The practice of Audi Hungary is also a good example. Because of the new challenges of the labour market they had to create a new HR image which became their own. The new slogan of the recruitment is – „Some call it work. We call it: passion” – under this brand they use story-telling forms straight from the colleagues about their personal experiences connecting to work. By this way, the company could make a really honest message to the potential and existing employees demonstrating the common values of the company and the workers. Due to this program not only the visitors of the carrier site but also the number of job applicants increased (AON, 2018).

Consequently, the application of playful solutions is considered to be a really effective method. In case of organizations applying the gamification, it can be said that the method has been also considered successful in areas which are very different from each other. Beyond that the gamification has proved its effectiveness in case of consumers, it can have such a good effect on the employees as well. However, initiations buttress that it works not just in case of existing employees but it can be applied when attracting the future potential workers as well. For instance, *Metropolitan University of Budapest* has developed an online tamagochi which supports the students interested in the profession of human resource in choice of career. Aim of the game is to confront the persons interested in the profession with the problems and difficulties of the profession and to provide feedback about its performance in the course of solving certain tasks. And, the character selection at the beginning of the game can forecast the diversity of labour market for the participants and the fact that everyone has different strength when performing a task (HR Portal, 2018). PWC has developed a game for similar purposes; its name is Multipoly Next. This is a kind of two-round simulation opportunity – based on, in one respect, online-, on the other hand, personal participation – which appears, as a part of the procedure, in the course of the virtual applying for a job offered by PWC. Language of the game is English thus it immediately serves as a filter during the future selection. Those who perform well in the online test can personally present their knowledge and interest (Heong, 2015b). Due to the real problem of labour shortages, there is another change which is aimed at the purpose that the organization wants to grant the interested employer positive experiences already during the selection. On this basis, *Profession*, as the leading Hungarian job search

portal placing emphasis as well, does not only pay attention to the response to incoming CVs when contacting but also describes the procedural process in detail in the feedback, by means of which the interested persons know what to expect. In many cases, this is followed up by a telephone interview where the presentation of organization is also highlighted in addition to getting to know an applicant. After a successful interview, the affected persons are informed in another detailed description e.g. whom they will personally meet in the interview, what questions they expect, how they can get to the office, where they can park and meet the colleagues of Profession deal with the case as if they sent an invitation to a business partner. In case of the personal meeting, the persons working in the organization take care of the comfort of a potential interested worker where they deliberately give the applicant a period of time to feel comfortable a little bit and be able to observe the work in the organization. Regardless of the fact that a part of the interviews does not come to a close successfully, a stressed importance is paid to the respect which is also reflected in the feedback. They do it consciously because they know that every candidate carries the company's reputation which is spreading very quickly. As a part of the feedback, the company-related experience is fortified further by the fact that the interviewees are allowed to evaluate the process in which they participated and how they felt during the selection (Istók, 2017a). Consequently, the "Candidate experience" means that the employees should be regarded as a market which operates likewise most areas of the private sector thus the applicable tools are similar, therefore, the pronounced part of the process starts from the employer brand and it should start from the awareness-raising. In case of the youngest generations of the labour market, Profession considers the informal tone and the spirit of partner important where the applicants, when searching for jobs, do not only face the expectations but also the things that the employers can provide. Through a regular contact, all these are continuously strengthened on different interfaces where this social group can be easily addressed. However, it is recommended to apply these assets only in the case if the atmosphere is equivalent in the affected organization so that the credibility cannot be impaired during a personal meeting (Istók, 2017b).

2.3. Opportunities to Establish Employee Experience for Departing Employees

Nowadays, topic of the employee experience has also become such central in Hungary that one of the largest HR service-providing companies, AON Hungary, has started a national research (2017). As a result of the research, it has been stated that the integrated operation of HR means that the full cycle of employees should not be managed in separate systems but the selection, entry, integration, performance evaluation, allowances or even the alumni programs after leaving should be interlinked into one strategy (Filius, 2018). For instance, PWC Hungary has a functioning alumni program which has been established for those ones who worked for the company and contributed to the organization's development but have been carrying on their career in other areas of the market since then. In this case, the persons applying for the program become members of Alumni Club and are informed about the latest information, initiatives and events; the purpose of all is to establish and maintain life-long relationships (PWC Hungary, 2018). This experience can closely belong to the quality of dismissal process within the organization. That is to say, care shall be taken to ensure, as far as possible, that the departing workers cannot be injured in their humanity and their professional self-esteem cannot be

impaired either (of course, there are often exceptional cases when this is unavoidable due to employee behaviour).

3. Conclusion

The conscious establishment of employee experiences becomes increasingly decisive during the successful operation of organizations; there are several positive examples of its possible ways. When this is carried out, several target groups appear who require the same extent of concentration. From the lessons learnt through the accomplished programs, it can be ascertained that every target group has specifications along which different HR functions reach dominant situation in the course of establishing the processes. In a possible model, the target groups can be placed for the purpose of supporting the practical applicability (Figure 2).

It is important to emphasize that, in case of existing employees, it is expedient to detail the employee experience further and to examine the possibility how it can be unfolded as much as possible by rethinking the given persons' jobs, helping the individuals to undergo the flow experience at the highest possible degree. From this point of view, the job analysis and planning can be the primary HR function which is applied. Beyond that, the regular feedback, being combined with elements of the incentive system, can also provide a basis for the formation of a perfect work experience.

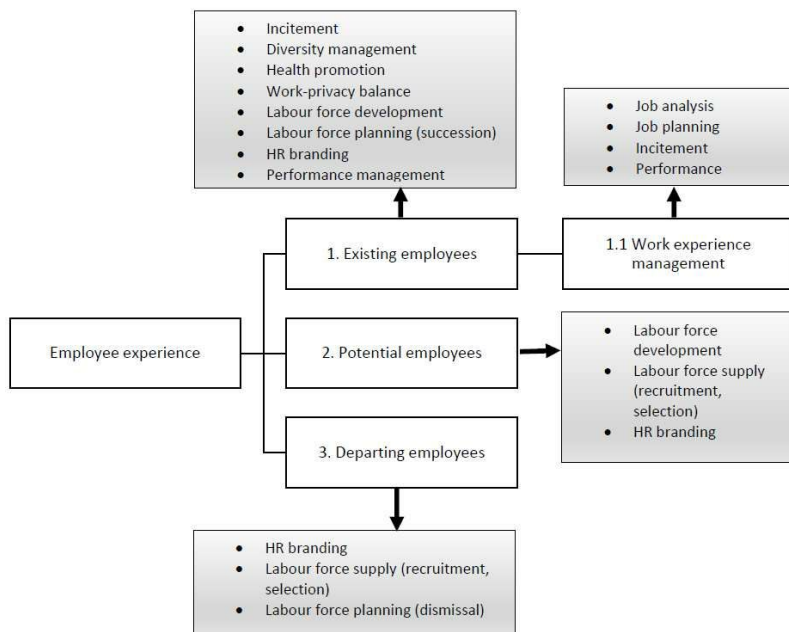


Figure 2: Classification of HR functions relating to the workplace-related experiences by target group

Source: own editing, 2019

From the point of view of experiences, in case of *existing colleagues*, the application of incitement- and diversity managements is buttressed up by the example of Airbnb. The methods applied by Prezi and BBSC stand out representing the help promotion and work-privacy balance. Efforts of Walmart on labour force development while efforts of Pernod Ricard on employee succession planning can be exemplary. By means of regular feedbacks, these developments can effectively contribute to the attracting and retaining abilities of an organization while building the corporate brand. When aiming at the group of *potential employees*, the experiences can appear expressly during the recruitment such as in case of the game applied by PWC where the labour force development was also an unequivocal achievement of the program. The conscious "experience creation" of recruitment and selection procedures can be built in several parts of the process by means of which the corporate perception is unequivocally outlined for those involved. For *departing colleagues*, in particular when they leave the company as a consequence of some kind of life situation and not due to performance problems, the alumni programs provide an opportunity by means of which the continuous contact becomes arranged and there will be an open opportunity for the persons to resume their career if they return to the company. Furthermore, a careless dismissal and a fair completion of the parting itself without prejudice of the parties can greatly contribute to the evolution of an organizational brand as well. As a consequence of the fact that the target groups of workplace experiences can be unequivocally separated from each other, those related HR functions have become sortable which can be specifically applied in order to increase efficiency after an organizational awareness-raising.

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